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20 Essential Tricks Every Skype User Should Know

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FEATURES

20 Essential Tricks Every Skype User Should Know

Posted 12/01/09 at 10:30:00 AM by **Paul Lilly**[Comments](#) [Print](#) [Email](#) [RSS](#) [StumbleUpon](#) [Reddit](#) [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#)

Spend a little time learning Skype and you'll soon discover it's much more than a one-trick pony. Sure, Skype's bread and butter is still its ability to let users make phone calls using their broadband connection, but there's so much more you can do with this versatile app.

109
diggs

There are the basics, like sending and receiving instant messages with other Skype users. But did you ever think to use Skype as a make-shift home surveillance system while you're away at work? By following a few simple steps, you can see if Fido's chewing on the couch again, and if so, issue a stern warning to cut it out.

digg it**120**
tweets

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You can also use Skype to record your own Podcast, weekly rant and all. We'll show you how, but that's not all. We're also going to walk you through an assortment of tweaks and hacks to get the most out of this Swiss-army utility. Consider this your go-to guide for making the most out of Skype.



Properly Set up Your Headset

Because Skype is first and foremost a VoIP client, the first thing you'll want to do is spend a little time getting your headset and microphone working properly. To start with, click on Tools, expand the General tab in the left-hand column, and select Audio settings.

This is where you'll configure Skype to use the proper devices. Under the Microphone pull-down menu, select the mic you want to use. If you're using a notebook with a built-in webcam or have a webcam attached to your desktop, it probably has an integrated mic. In our experience, these are usually low quality and pick up a ton of background noise. Use your headset's mic instead, or consider investing in a standalone microphone.

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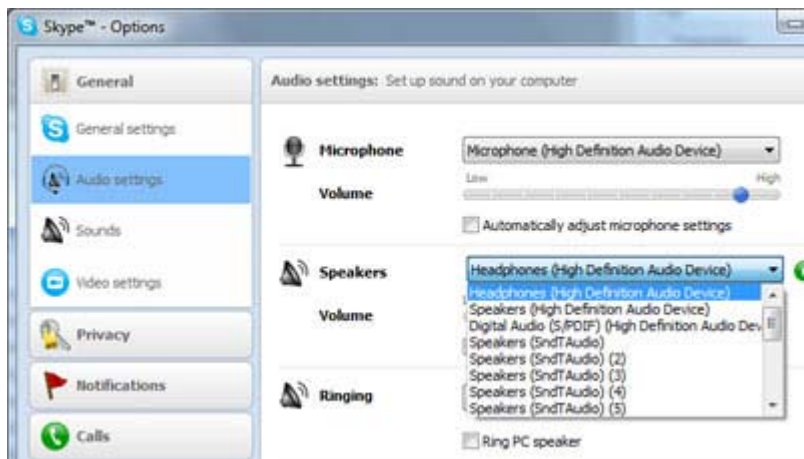
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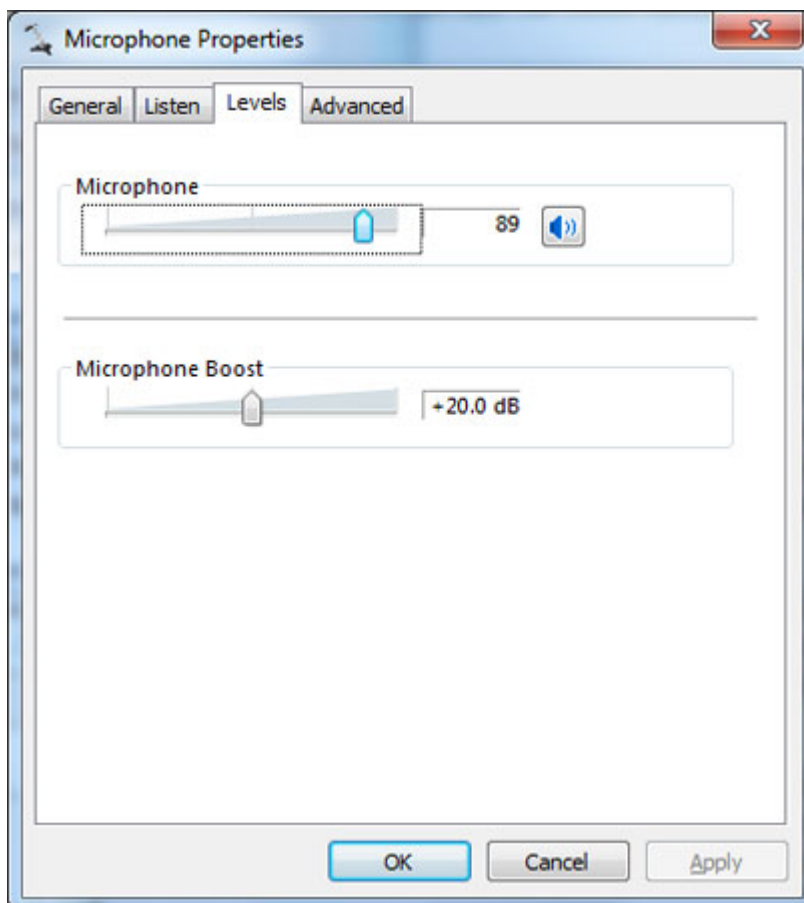
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Now turn your attention to the speakers pull-down the menu, and once again, select the appropriate speakers settings. Ideally, Skype will switch to your PC's speakers when you unplug your headset, but if you're not hearing any sound, open up the sound options and adjust it manually.

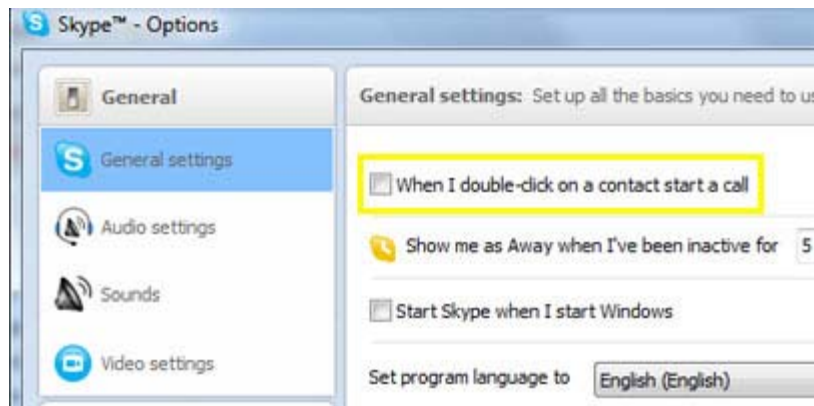
We typically adjust both the microphone and speaker sliders to about 90 percent in Skype and disable the automatic adjustments for each by unchecking the appropriate boxes. Instead, we'll adjust these manually within Windows sound properties. To get there, right-click the sound icon in the systray and select Recording. Double-click on Microphone and select the Levels tab. Adjust the microphone volume to anywhere between 75 to 90, depending on how sensitive your mic is. If it's still not loud enough, adjust the Microphone Boost setting.



To test out your settings, you can phone a friend, or buzz Skype Test Call, which will allow you to record a message and play it back to test your audio settings.

Stop Accidentally Calling Your Contacts

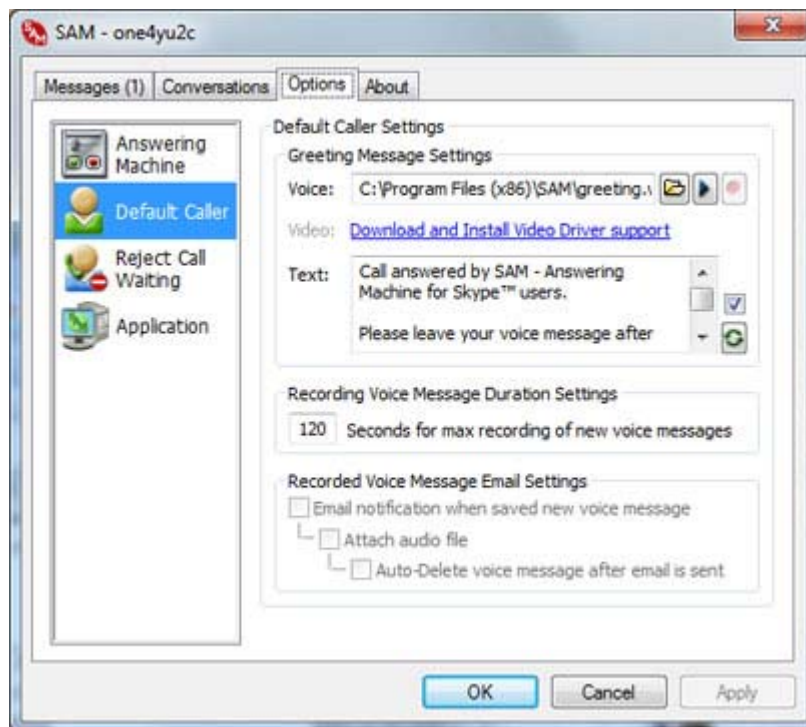
If you're like us, you're constantly ringing your contacts when you meant to send them a quick IM instead. Should you quickly hang up and hope they realize it was a mistake, or let it ring through and play it off like you had something urgent to discuss? Better yet, let's prevent these situations from occurring in the first place.



Click on Tools>Options>General Settings. At the very top, uncheck the 'When I double-click on a contact start a call' checkbox and click save. Wasn't that easy?

Set up an Answering Machine

With an unlimited subscription plan, voicemail comes standard, and it only runs about \$3/month. Or you can buy voicemail service separately as a 3 month subscription for \$6, or 12 months for \$20. These are pretty reasonable rates if you're a heavy Skype user, but it's still an out-of-pocket expense.



Enter SAM, which stands for Skype Answering Machine. This handy add-on lives up to its name and should be the first app you attach to any Skype installation. When your status changes to 'Away,' SAM will intercept phone calls (you can configure how many rings until SAM kicks in) and plays a standard answer machine message followed by a beep. If the caller decides to leave a message, you'll be able to play it back when you return to your PC.

Just like a real answering machine, SAM lets you record your own greeting and can auto-reject call waiting.

Free, www.kishkish.com

Discover Hidden Emoticons

By default, Skype includes one-click access to no less than 72 emoticons running the gamut from putting lipstick on to sending a rain cloud, and everything in between. But guess what? Skype's holding out on you. What if you're in the mood to moon somebody? Or maybe the person you're talking with has driven you to bang your head on the wall. There's an emoticon for that.



You can find an expanded list of emoticons right [here](#), along with each one's keyboard shortcut. But wait, there's still more! In addition to the multitude of smileys, Skype also includes emoticons for nearly every country under the sun, even Canada. Get your scroll wheel ready and spy an expanded cheat sheet [here](#).

If nothing else, memorize these ten mostly self- explanatory emoticon shortcuts and you'll be prepared for just about any situation:

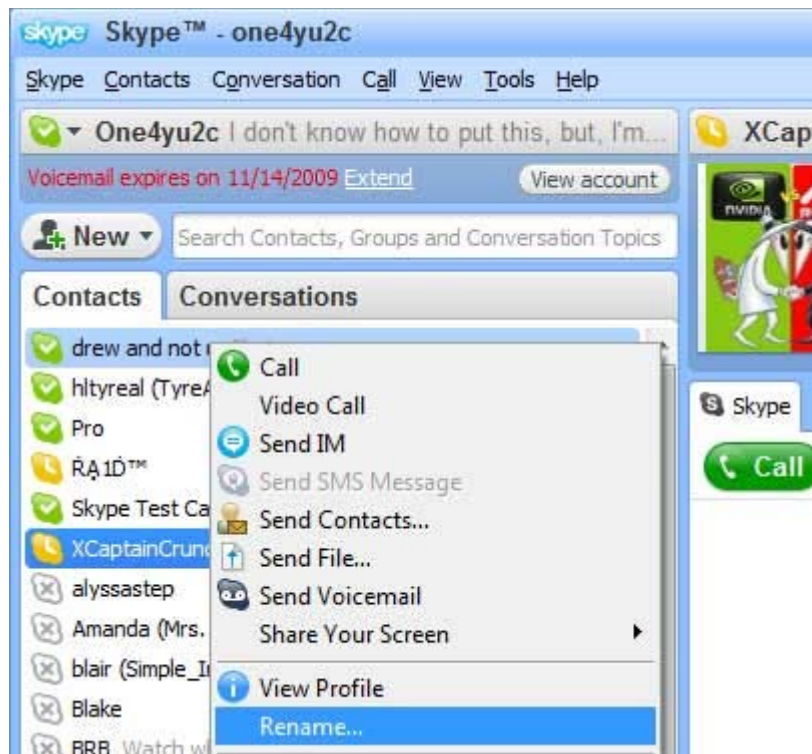
1. (puke)
2. (party)
3. (finger)
4. (swear)
5. (banghead)
6. (tmi)
7. (drunk)
8. (punch)
9. (y)
10. (n)

Organize Your Contacts

Finding a single contact out of 10 or 15 is a piece of cake. But what about sifting through dozens, or even hundreds of Skype users? That's a bit more time consuming, especially when you're wading through a mix of real names and pseudonyms all clumped together in a massive, scrollable list. Take control of your contact list by employing a few simple strategies.

Rename Your Contacts

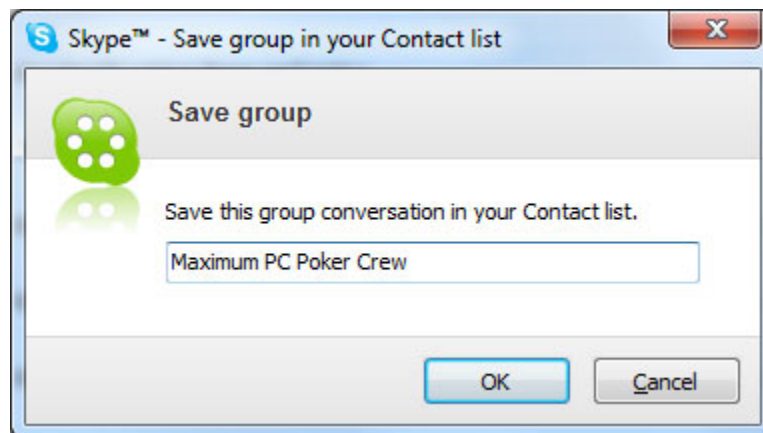
Remember using a Rolodex? For the younger generation, a Rolodex is like your iPhone's address book, except it's made out of trees (Family Guy fans will get that reference). Either way, it's a lot easier to sort through your social network by organizing everyone based on their birth name, not their Internet nick. Would you really think to look for Jeff Reece under 'X' for 'XCaptainCrunchX'?



Like any instant messaging app worth its salt, Skype lets you rename your contacts. All you have to do is right-click on a contact and select 'Rename.' If you want, you can put the person's nickname in parenthesis, like this: **Jeff Reece (XCaptainCrunchX)**.

Create Groups

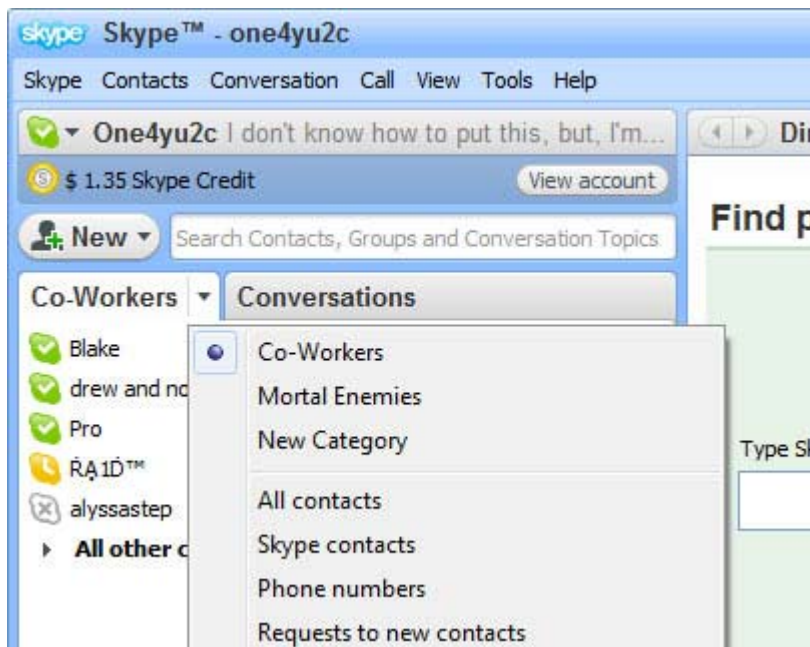
Even though you may have dozens of contacts, you probably find yourself chatting with the same groups of people on a consistent basis. For example, do you play poker or any other online game with same handful of friends? Creating a group will save you time by not having to click on each one individually every time you want to start up a chat or voice conference.



To set up a group, click on **Contacts>Create New Group**. Add contacts by dragging and dropping them to the designated area (right-click and select 'remove person from this group' if you accidentally add someone you didn't intend), and when you're finished, click the 'Save group in Contacts' button and give your group a name. The group you just created will now show up in your contacts list.

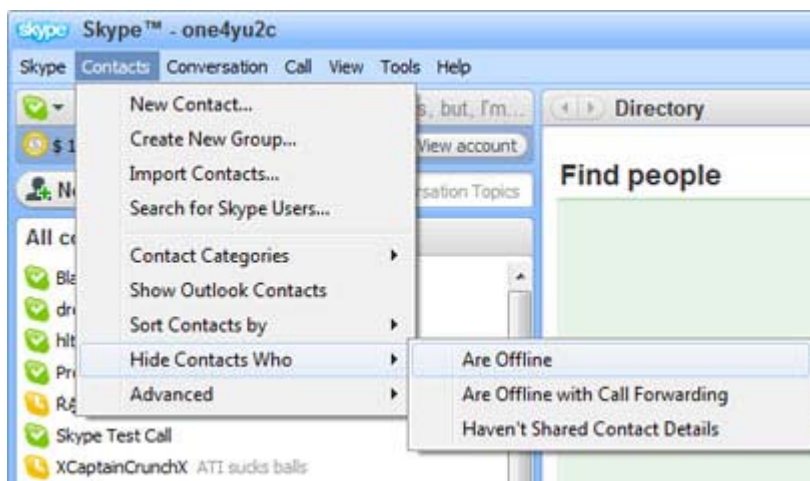
Whittle Down with Categories

By setting up categories, you can clump your family, friends, co-workers, and anyone else into handy containers that make it much easier to narrow down your contacts and find who it is you want to talk with.



Start by navigating to **Contacts>Contact Categories>Create New Category**. At the top of your contacts list, it will say **New Category**. If you want to create one for your co-workers, drag and drop the names of everyone you work with to the designated area. When you're finished, right-click 'New Category' to rename it. Now whenever you want to sort by categories, just click on the arrow.

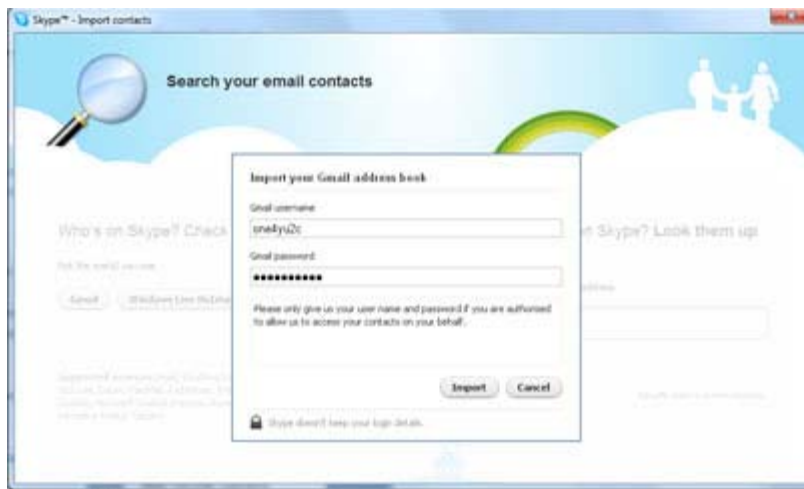
Hide Offline Contacts



By default, Skype drops offline contacts to the bottom of the list, but the OCD in us still wants a cleaner layout. To hide offline friends from view, click on **Contacts>Hide Contacts Who>Are Offline**. You can also hide contacts who haven't yet shared their contact information with you, or just those who are offline with call forwarding.

Beef Up Your Contacts (by Importing from Email)

You can quickly and easily import contacts from your email address book into Skype, and you may even discover that some of your contacts are already using Skype. This is also a great way to invite your network of friends, family, and co-workers to register for a Skype account.



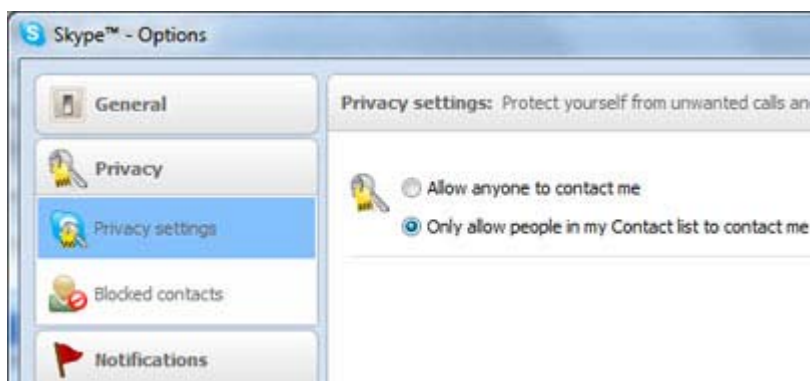
To do this, navigate to **Contacts>Import Contacts...** This will bring up a window with different email options: Gmail, Windows Live, Hotmail, AOL, and Other. Mashing the Other button displays a pretty extensive pull-down menu with a bunch of other email services and clients, including Microsoft Outlook. Choose whichever email client you want to import contacts from, type in your username and password (if applicable), and press **Import**.



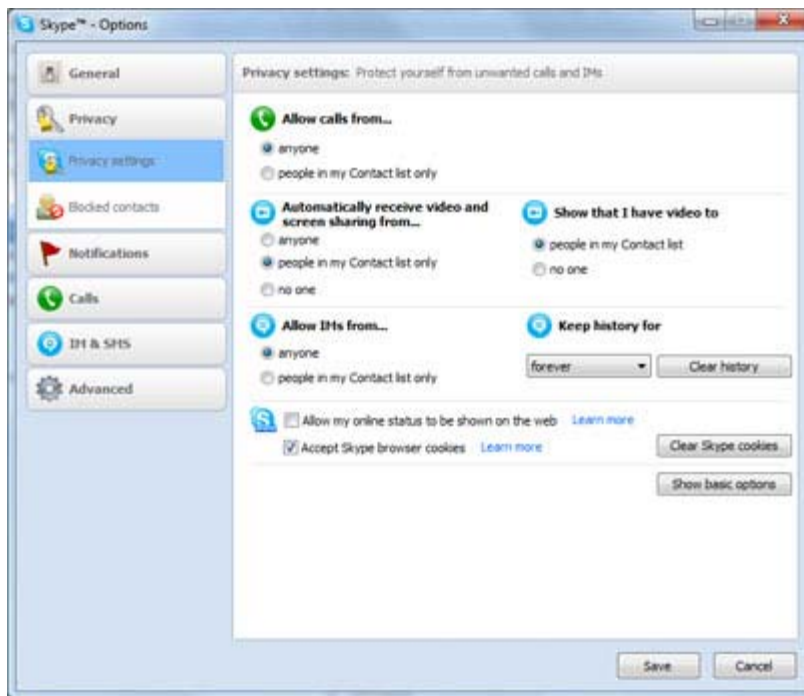
In the next step, you'll be given an opportunity to select as many or as few of the contacts Skype digs up. And then yet another chance to change your mind when you're prompted to enter a personalized message with your contact request.

Deliver a One-Two Combo to Spam

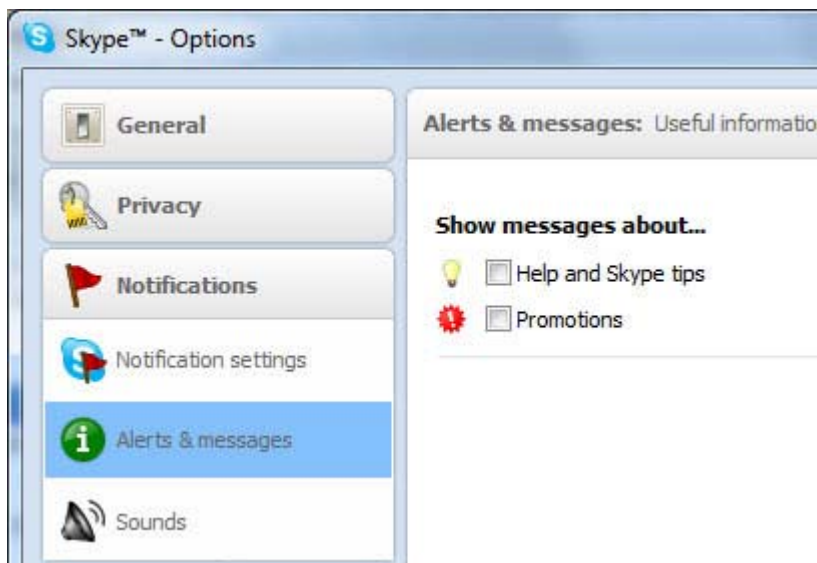
We're not sure there's any rhyme or reason for it, but it seems as though we'll go weeks without any rogue IMs, and then all of a sudden be bombarded with spam messages through the course of a few days. Or at least that's what used to happen before we took matters into our own hands.



The easiest way to send spammers packing is by refusing to receive messages from anyone not in your contact list. By default, anyone is allowed to contact you. To change this, navigate to **Tools>Options>Privacy**. Click the 'Only allow people in my Contact list to contact me' radio button and mash the **Save** button.



For more fine grain control over your privacy settings, click the 'Show Advanced Options' button. This will allow you to setup Skype so that only your contacts can send you a message, but anyone can call you, or vice versa. There's also a few other self-explanatory options you can configure to fit your needs.



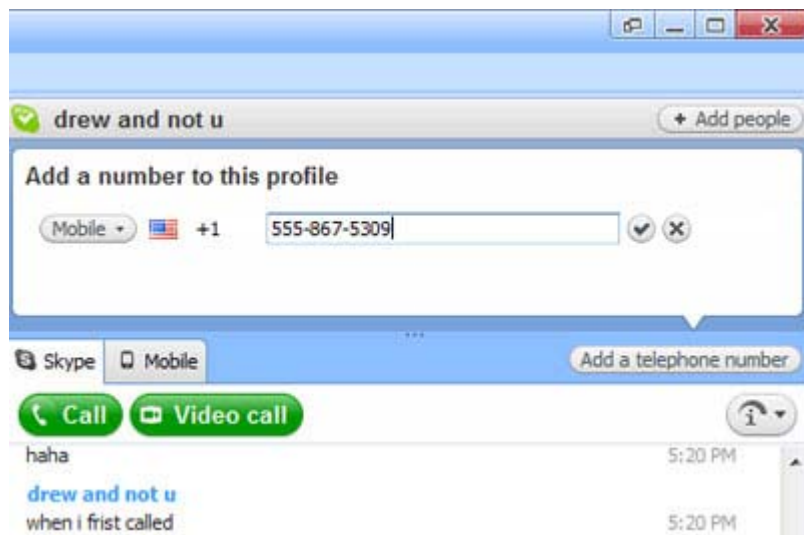
Random spammers pushing their wares and scams aren't the only nuisances you'll encounter. Out of the box, Skype will hit you between the eyes with fairly frequent (and annoying) pop-up messages. To disable these, navigate to Tools>Options>Notifications. Click on 'Alerts & Messages' and uncheck both options.

Send an SMS Message

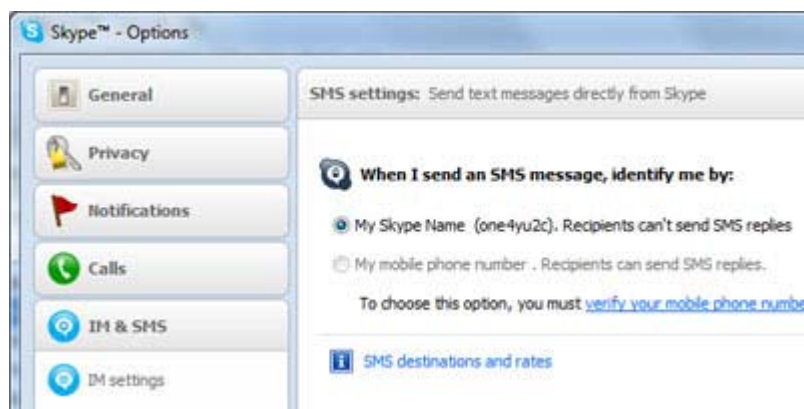


Sending a text message through Skype is easy, but it isn't free. The cost to send an SMS in the United States runs around \$.013 (see rates [here](#)), which is a tough pill to swallow considering you probably have an unlimited text message plan through your mobile carrier.

So why even bother sending an SMS via Skype? Convenience, for one. While we're not going to send a ton of texts through Skype, it can come in handy if you left your smartphone in another room or at home. In a pinch, a little bit of loose change is a fair trade off for the occasional urgent message. It's also nice being able to type out our texts with a full sized keyboard rather than resorting to shorthand on your virtual and/or slide-out plank.

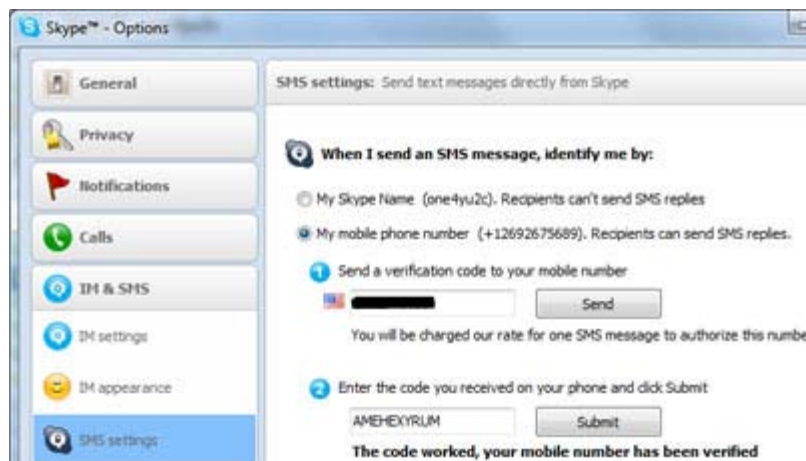


To send an SMS, you first need to associate a mobile number with one of your contacts. To do this, select a name from your contact list and hit the 'Add a telephone number' button on the right-hand side. Punch in the mobile number and press the checkmark. To send an SMS to the mobile number, just right-click on the contact and select 'Send an SMS message.'



When you send an SMS this way, you'll be identified by your Skype name and recipients will not be able to reply. Skype lets you change this so that you're identified by your mobile number instead, and this also makes it possible for recipients to send a reply. To set it up like this, click on Tools>Options>IM & SMS>SMS settings. Click on the 'Verify your mobile phone number' link and enter in your phone number (note that you'll be charged Skype's text messaging fee to verify your number).

Here's where Skype can get a little fussy. In this next step, you're supposed to enter in your mobile number and mash the Send button, at which point Skype will text you a verification code. But what do you do if the Send button remains grayed out? It's doesn't mean your phone is incompatible, it's just quirk with Skype. Click on the flag icon and change it to another country (it doesn't matter which one), and then change it back to the U.S. flag. Now when you type in your mobile number, the Send button will come alive.



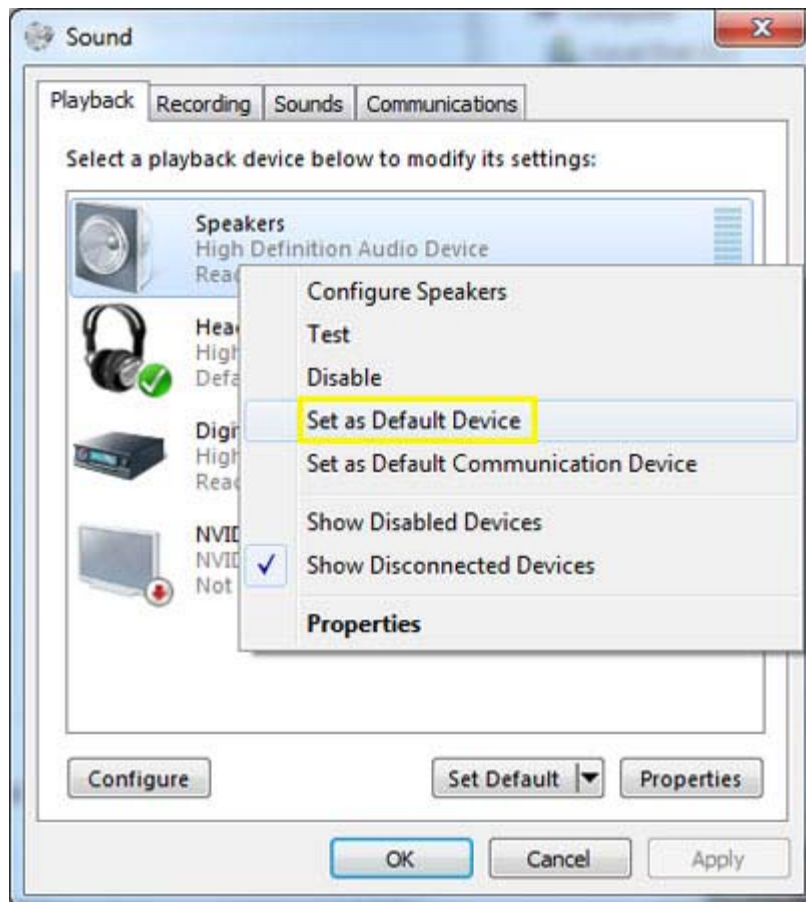
In a few seconds, you'll receive a verification code. Punch this into the second text box and hit Submit. Once your number has been verified, hit Save and exit.

Play Music Through Your Speakers While Chatting with Your Headset

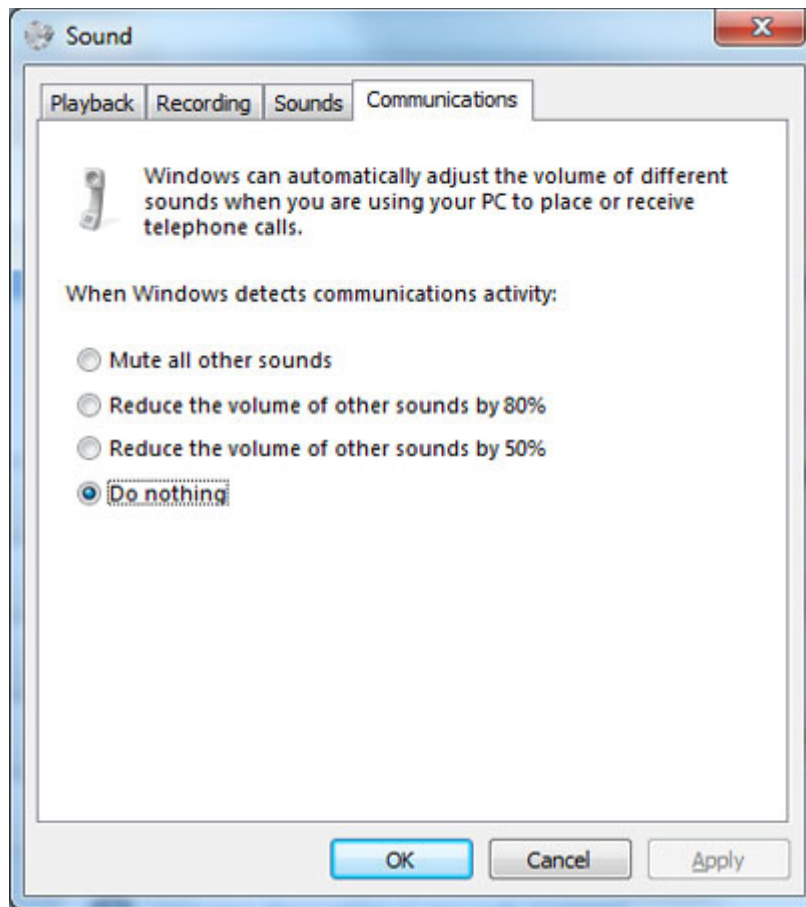
In order to listen to background music while placing a Skype call, you either have to pipe your conversation through your computer speakers along with your groovy tunes, or play music through your headset, which can make it hard to hear the person on the other end of the line. Fortunately, there's a way to separate the two.



If you haven't already configured Skype to use your headset, go to Tools>Options>Audio Settings and select the appropriate device in the Speakers pull-down menu.



Next we need to setup our PC to blast our tunes through the speakers. Right-click the Sound icon in the Systray (alternately, you can type Sound in the Start menu and click on Sound under the Control Panel) and select Playback devices. Right-click the Speakers icon and select 'Set as default device.' After you do this, there should be two green checkmarks, one next to the Headphones icon and another next to Speakers.



By default, whenever you make a call, your speakers will automatically adjust the volume of all other sounds by 80 percent. As a courtesy to the person on the other end of the line, it isn't a bad idea to leave it this way so they're not forced to listen to your music (some people just aren't into Bluegrass). But if you want to retain full control of your speakers' volume, select the Communications tab in the Sound properties windows and click the Do nothing radio button.

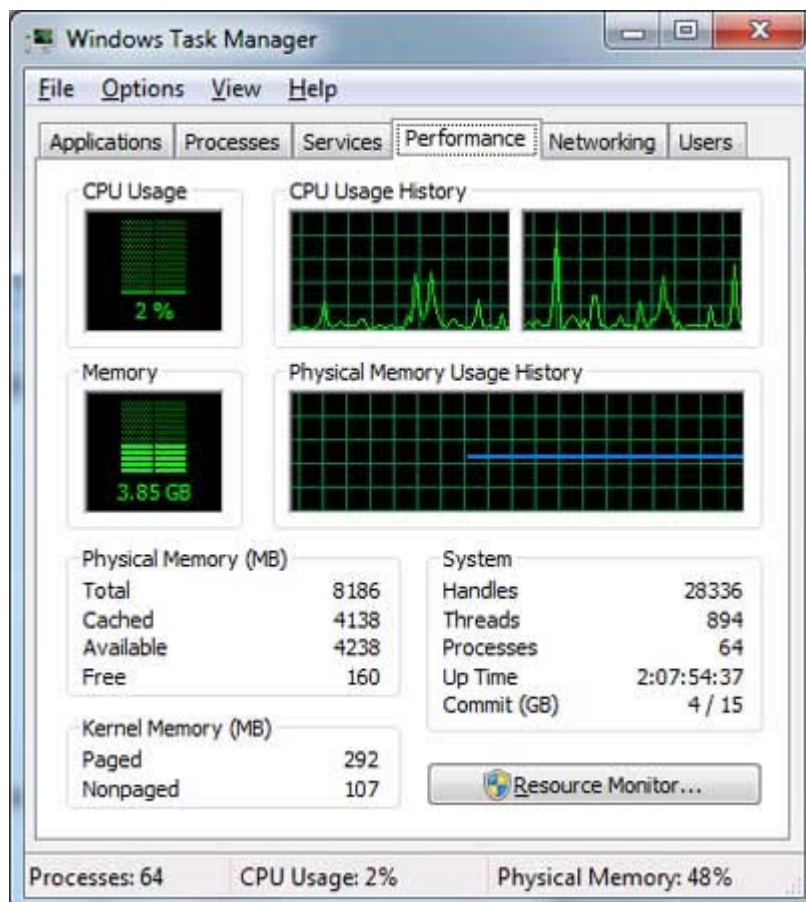
Create Your Own Podcast

Using Skype, you can create your own professional sounding Podcasts that rival the sound quality of those using much more expensive equipment. And provided no one is using a \$0.25 microphone picked up from Walmart's clearance bin, you may find that your Podcast sounds better than most radio interviews where it's clear the guest is speaking through a telephone rather than sitting in the studio next to the DJ.



Image Credit: Razer

Don't get us wrong, you don't need an ultra-expensive microphone, but we suggest using one with noise canceling capabilities so you don't end up broadcasting sounds from the background. And generally speaking, you should avoid using the mic that comes built into most webcams and notebooks, as these tend to be pretty low quality. Headsets with built-in microphones typically work well.

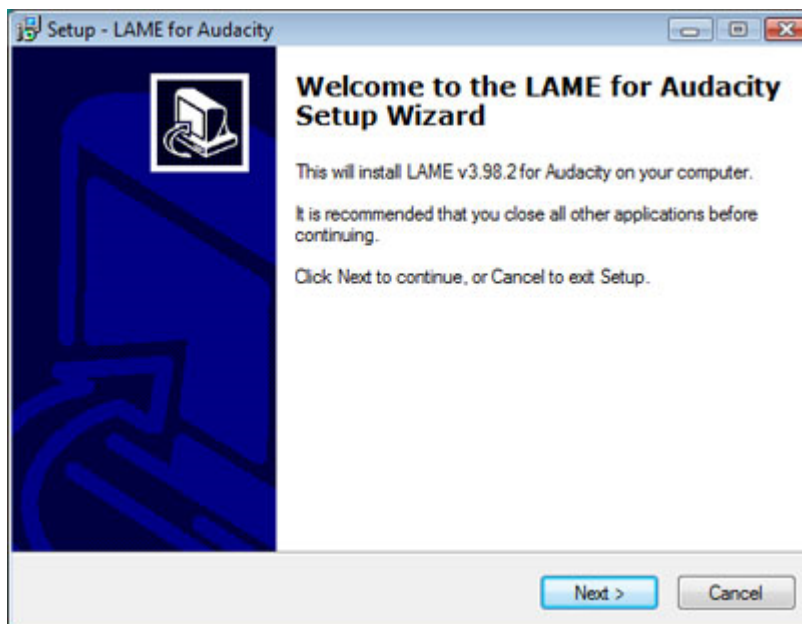


The next order of business is to shut down any programs you're not using, particularly any app that taps into your Internet bandwidth. Is Outlook running? Shut it down. Downloading a torrent? Pause it and close uTorrent. You don't want anything running

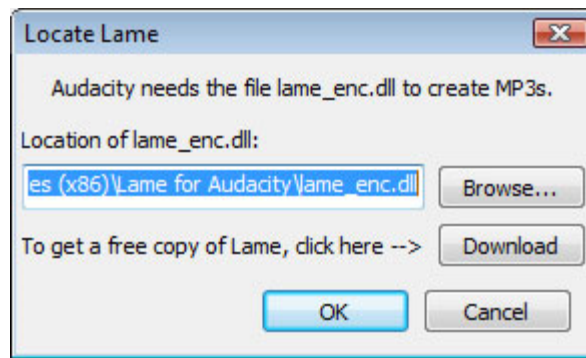
that could potentially degrade the sound quality of Skype, especially if you plan on including multiple recipients in your podcast.



Next, download the latest version of Audacity from [here](#). If you're running Windows 7, we suggest installing the latest beta release, which is currently version 1.3.9. We ran into some quirks running the latest stable build on our Windows Home Professional 64-bit testbed, but the beta release ran without a hitch.

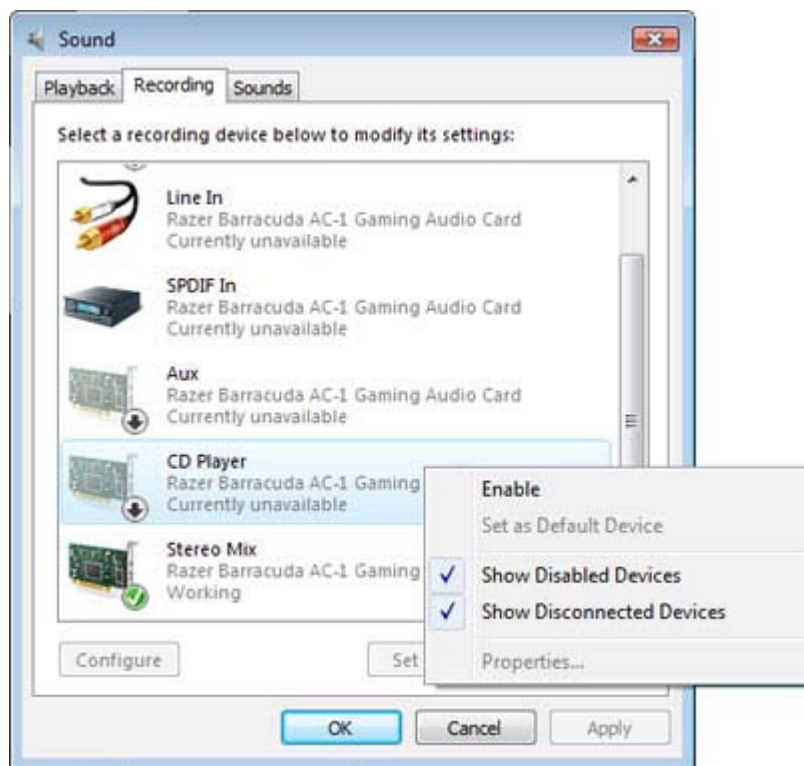


Due to the murky legal waters surrounding software patents, Audacity opts not to bundle and distribute an MP3 encoder with its recording software. And that's just fine, because it's easy enough add an encoder ourselves. To do so, download the LAME (Lame Ain't an Mp3 Encoder) from [here](#) and install to the default directory.



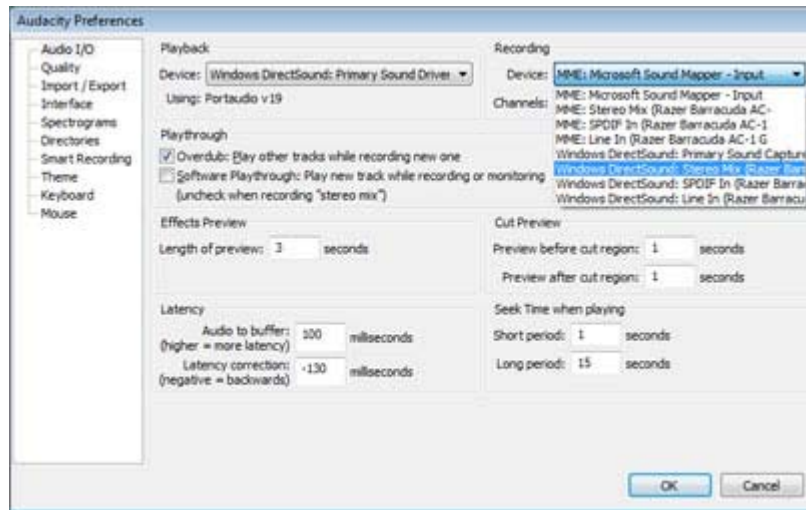
When it's finished installing, fire up Audacity and navigate to Edit>Preferences>Libraries. Click the Locate button and then press Okay.

Here's where things get a little tricky. Starting with Vista, the ability to record sounds from your PC's audio channels have been stripped away, or at least it would appear that way at first glance. It's widely believed this was done to prevent end users from recording streaming audio, such as songs from an online radio station (isn't DRM grand?). Unfortunately, this also prevents us from recording other Skype users.

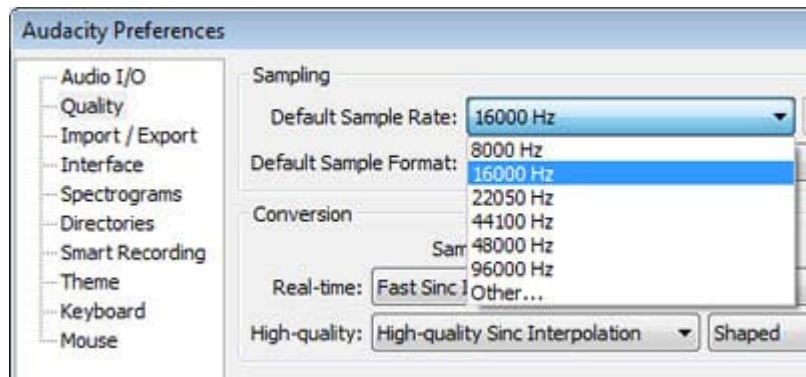


To get around this, we need to re-enable the Stereo Mix option as a recording device. Right-click the sound icon in the Systray and select Recording devices. Next, right-click any of the devices and check the option to 'Show Disabled Devices.' If your soundcard supports Stereo Mix, you should now see the option lightly grayed out. Right-click and select Enable.

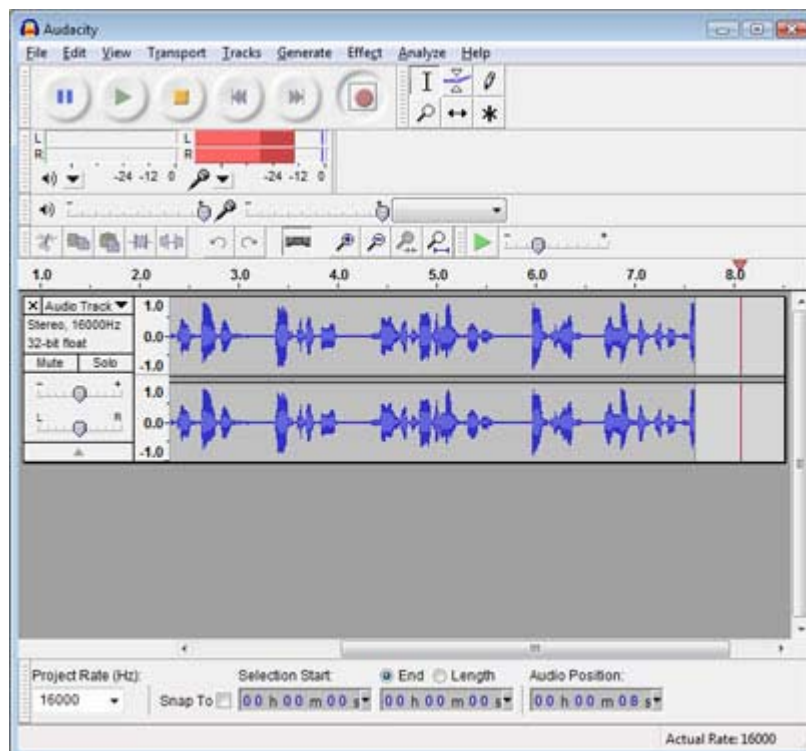
If you don't see the Stereo Mix option, it's possible your sound solution doesn't support the option, either at the hardware level or by restricting access at the driver level. Either way, there's no easy remedy short of investing in a discrete soundcard that supports Stereo Mix, such as Razer's Barracuda AC-1 or Creative's X-Fi series (Creative calls Stereo Mix 'What U Hear').



We're almost ready to start recording. Fire up Audacity again if you previously closed it down, then navigate to Edit>Preferences>Audio I/O (depending on which version of Audacity you have, Audio I/O might also be labeled Devices). In the Device pull-down menu under Recording, select Stereo Mix (or What U Hear).

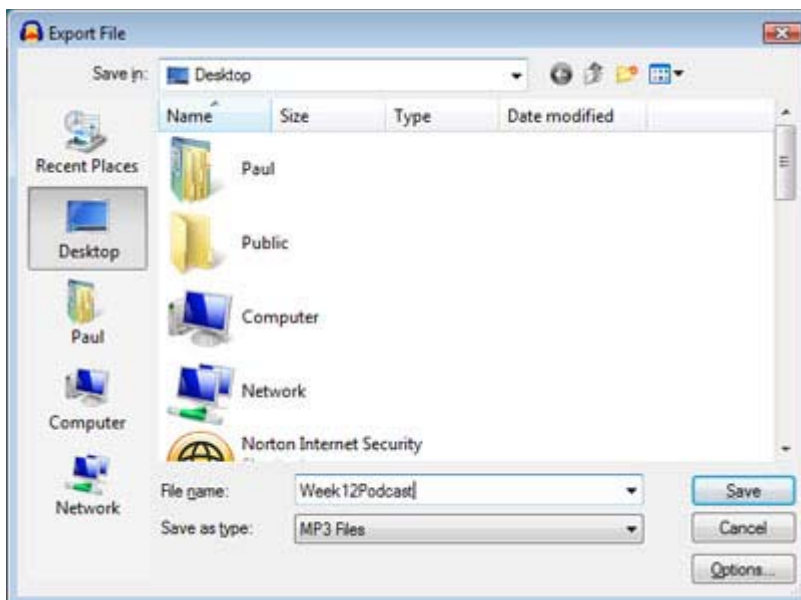


Jump over to the Quality section in Audacity's Preferences tree on the left-hand side. Change the Default Sample Rate to 16000Hz. This will strike a good balance between sound quality and file size, but if you truly need a higher quality recording, play around with higher sample rates.



Now you're ready to start recording! Once you and your guest(s) are ready, just hit the record button. If everything is set up correctly, you'll see the audio track updated in real-time. If not, you need to retrace your steps to see where you might have went wrong, or adjust your microphone's volume.

Spend some time playing around with Audacity to learn the program's intricacies. When you're finished recording, you can delete awkward moments of silence or other undesirable parts of the recording you don't want included in the final product. You can also add in background music and sound effects by recording additional streams. We're not going to cover all the tricks you can do with Audacity (at least not in this guide), but as you play around, you'll soon discover it's a pretty powerful recording program that belies its free price tag.



The last order of business is to save your finished recording as an MP3 file. Click File>Export and fill in the Metadata form (track title, track number, and so forth). After you've tagged your Podcast, mash the OK button and select MP3 from the Save as type pull-down menu.

Make Skype Calls with Your Smartphone

It took a little while for Skype to get with the times, but it's finally possible to integrate the VoIP service with your smartphone and call other Skype users from your handset. It's still a little bit rocky, but serviceable for the most part.



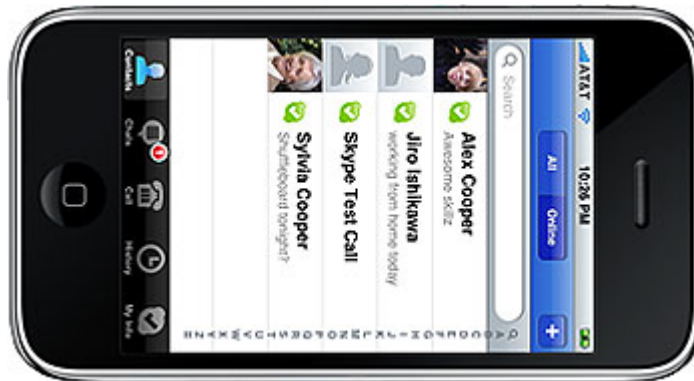
If you own a G1 or other Android-based handset, hit up the Google Market and search for Skype Lite Beta. After you install the app, you'll be prompted for your username, password, and phone number. We had mixed results getting the beta to work properly, but

when it does work, the cool thing is you don't need a 3G or Wi-Fi connection. Calls to other Skype users are free, minus any local rates and minutes charges through your wireless carrier. Receiving calls, however, is not free, though you have the option of disabling this function.



Image Credit: gadgetell.com

Alternately, Android owners can also give iSkoot a spin. This app works pretty much the same way Skype Lite Beta does, so if you're having trouble getting one to work, try the other.

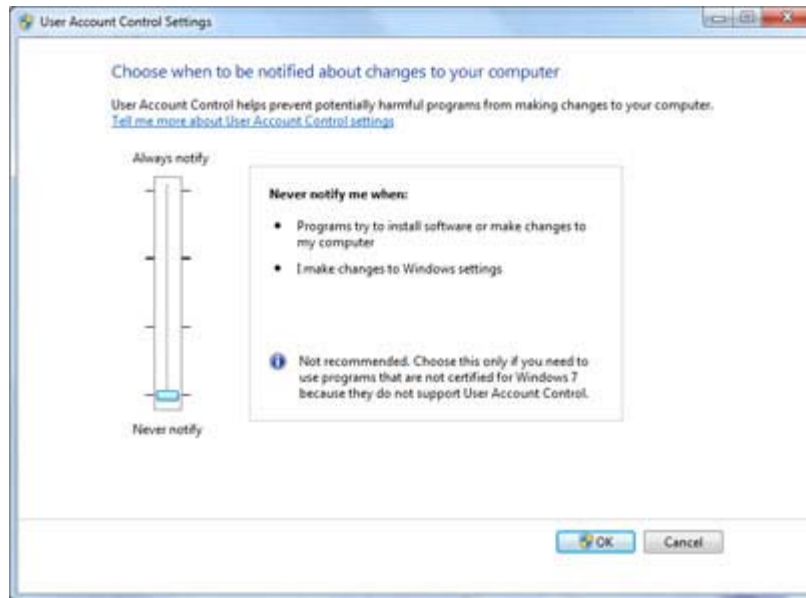


So what happens if you want to make a Skype call through your iPhone? There's an app for that (see what we did there?). You can download the Skype app for the iPhone and iPod touch [here](#), and unlike Android owners, the iPhone/iPod touch version sports a slicker interface with a few more options.

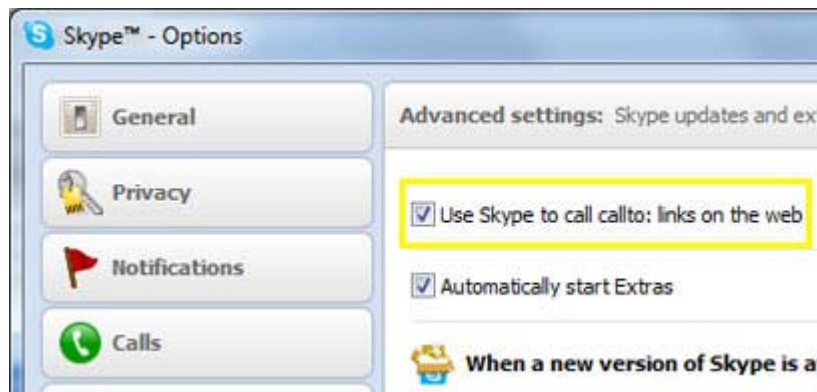
For a full list of compatible handsets, rate information, and other FAQs, see [here](#).

Have Skype Send You a Wake Up Call

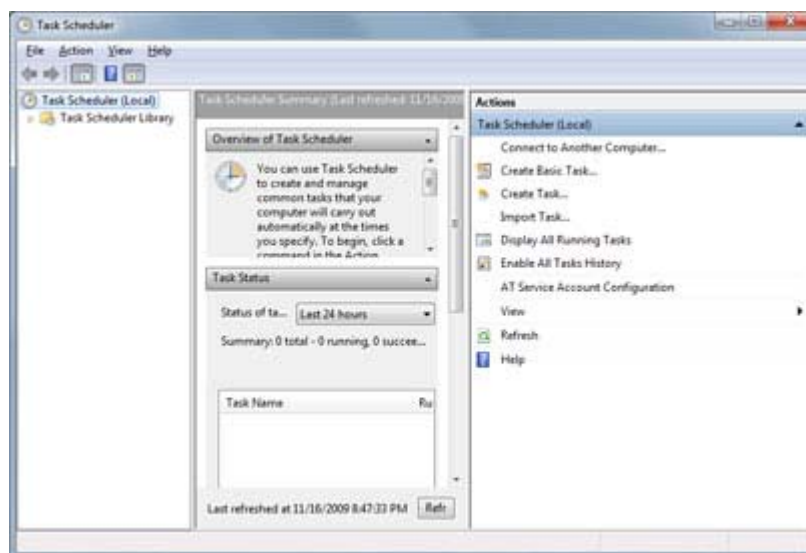
Don't trust hotel management to send you a wake up call in the morning? If you need a wake up call, Skype can oblige.



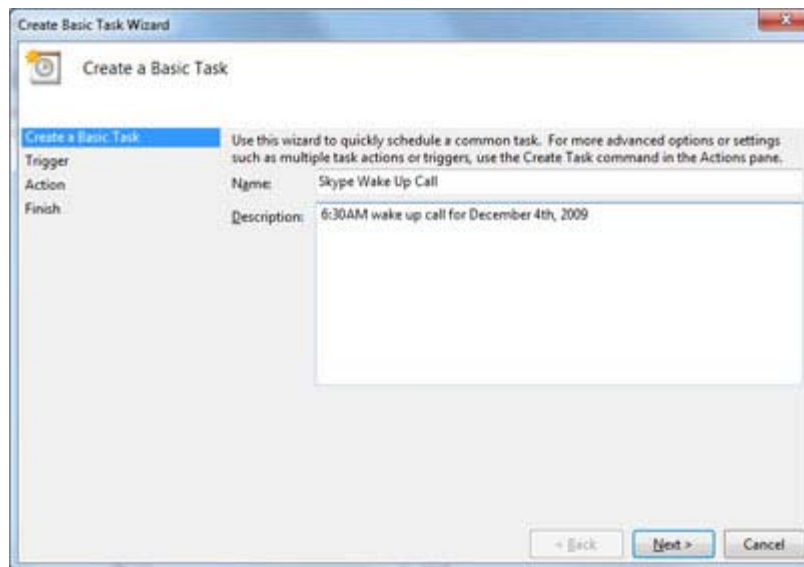
This hack takes a bit of preparation in order to work properly. On your home PC, or whichever system you're configuring to make the wake up call, you'll need to disable UAC. Click on Start and type UAC. Drag the slider down to Never notify and hit OK.



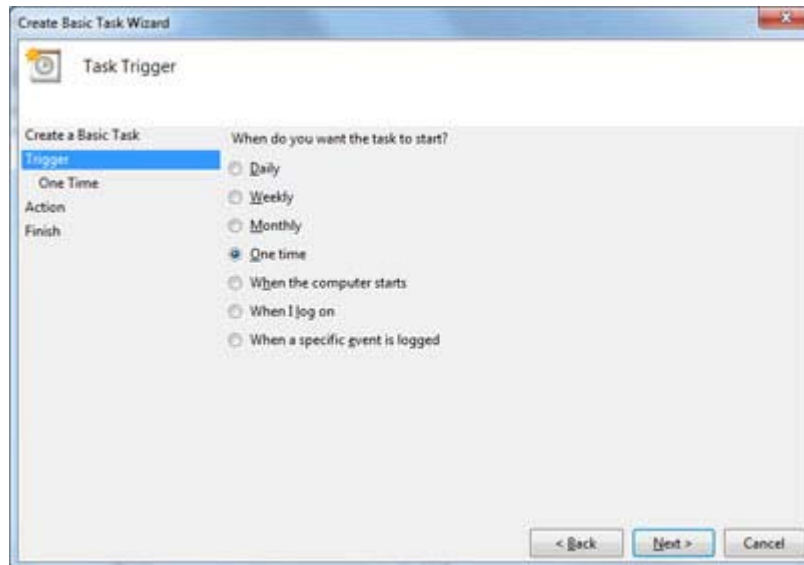
Next, open up Skype and navigate to Tools>Options>Advanced. Check that box that reads 'Use Skype to call callto: links on the web.'



The ability to place wake up calls isn't integrated into Skype, so we're going to tap into Windows to get the job done. To do this, we need to create a scheduled task. Click on the Start menu, type Task Scheduler, and then click on the Task Scheduler link. In the right-hand pane under Actions, click on Create Basic Task...



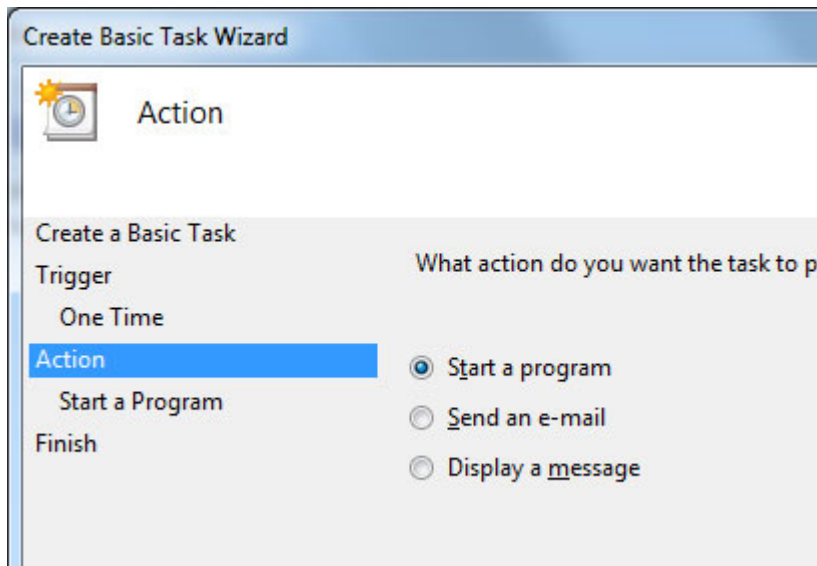
This opens up the Basic Task Wizard, which will walk you through process creating an automated task. In the first step, you'll give your task a name. In this case, go ahead and name it Skype Wake Up Call. Add a description in the designated area if desired, otherwise click on Next.



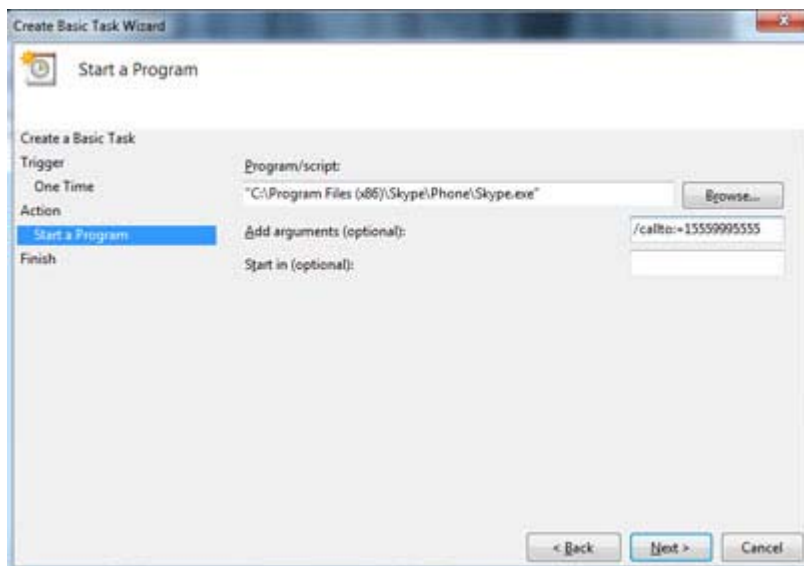
On the next screen, you'll choose when you want this task to start. For a one-time wake up call, select the One time radio button. Alternately, you can configure your wake up call to occur daily, weekly, or monthly. Click Next.



The next screen is where you'll choose a time and date. Be sure to pay attention the AM and PM setting so you don't accidentally set a wake up call 12 hours too late or too early! Click Next.



This brings up the Action menu. Click the Start a program radio button and press Next.



In this next step, we're going to direct the Task Scheduler to the Skype executable. Click on the Browse button and find Skype.exe. By default, this should be in **C:\Program Files (x86)\Skype\Phone**. In the Add arguments (optional) field, type **/callto:+1xxxxxxxxxx** and input your mobile phone number, including area code, in place of each 'x.' So for example if your mobile phone number is 555-555-1234, you would type **/callto: +15555551234**.

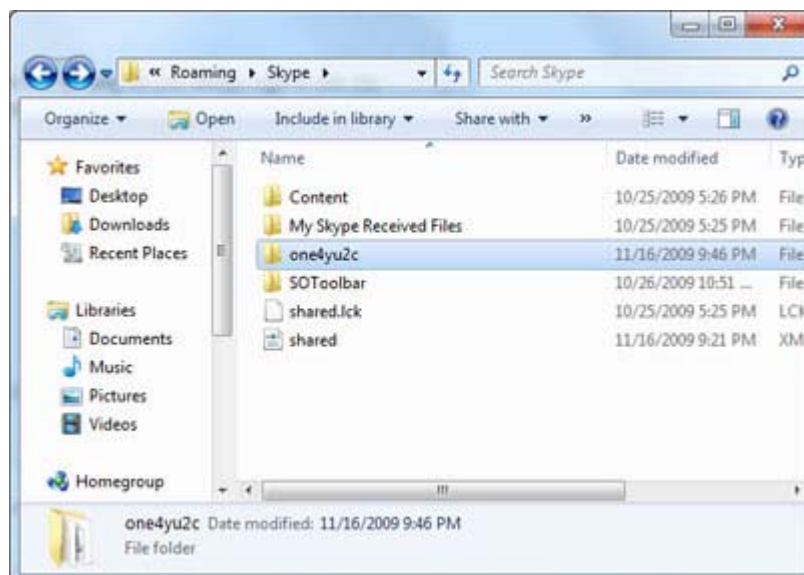
There's one more step we need to take to make sure the wake up call goes through without a hitch. In the main Task Scheduler window, click on Task Scheduler Library. In the pane immediately to the right, find the Task you created (Skype Wake Up Call). If you don't see it, you may need to exit and restart the Task Scheduler. Right-click the task and select Run. If you followed the above steps correctly, Skype should now open automatically and try to call your mobile phone, but the process gets halted by a pop-up window alerting you that you're about to call a number (duh). Click the 'Do not ask me again' checkbox and hit OK.



That's it! The next time this task runs (at the designated time), your PC should fire up Skype and call your mobile phone. Just be aware that this taps into your Skype credit, so make sure you have enough in your account for a wake up call.

Backup Skype Configuration and Chat History

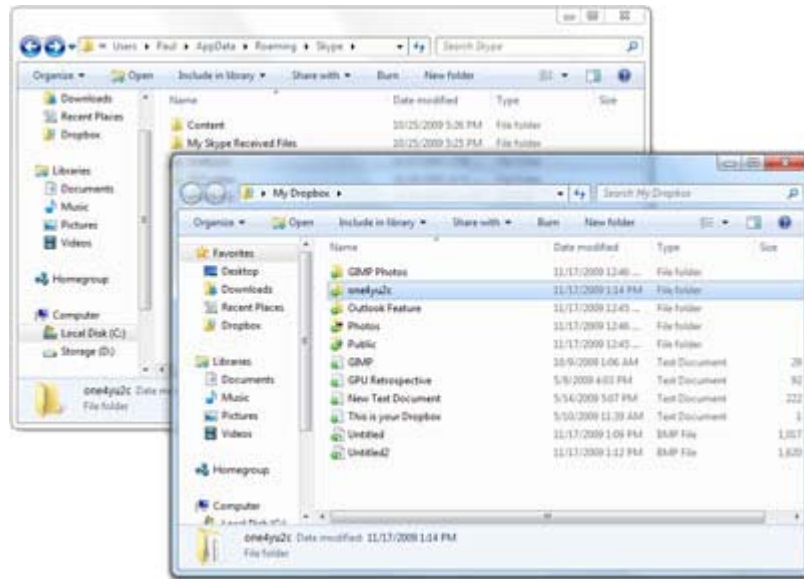
Whether switching to another computer or reinstalling Windows (and thus Skype), you needn't lose your instant messaging history, nor do you need to start over from scratch and re-configure all your settings.



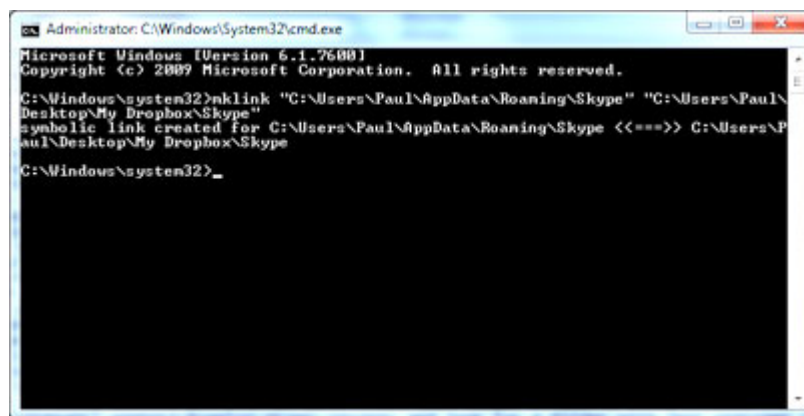
To backup your chat history and configuration in Vista and Windows 7, navigate to **C:\Users\[USERNAME]\AppData\Roaming\Skype**. If you're running Windows XP, go to **C:\Documents and Settings\[USERNAME]\ApplicationData\Skype**. Find a folder in the directory with your Skype username and copy this to a USB stick or CD/DVD. When you reinstall Skype, transfer this folder into the same directory.

Sync Skype on Multiple PCs

You can think of Dropbox as chocolate syrup. Why? Because it makes everything sweeter, and Skype is no exception. We just showed you how to backup your Skype configuration files and chat history for importing to another machine, but what if you wanted to sync your Skype install on multiple PCs? With a little bit of tweaking -- and some help from Dropbox -- you can do just that. Here's how.



First, download Dropbox from [here](#) and install it on every machine you plan to sync. Close down Skype. If you're using Windows 7 or Vista, navigate to **C:\Users\[USERNAME]\AppData\Roaming** (Windows XP users will navigate to **C:\Documents and Settings\[User Name]\Application Data Folder**). Move (don't copy) the Skype folder to your Dropbox location. The easiest way to do this is to right-click the folder, select the Cut command, and then paste it into Dropbox (right-click, Paste).

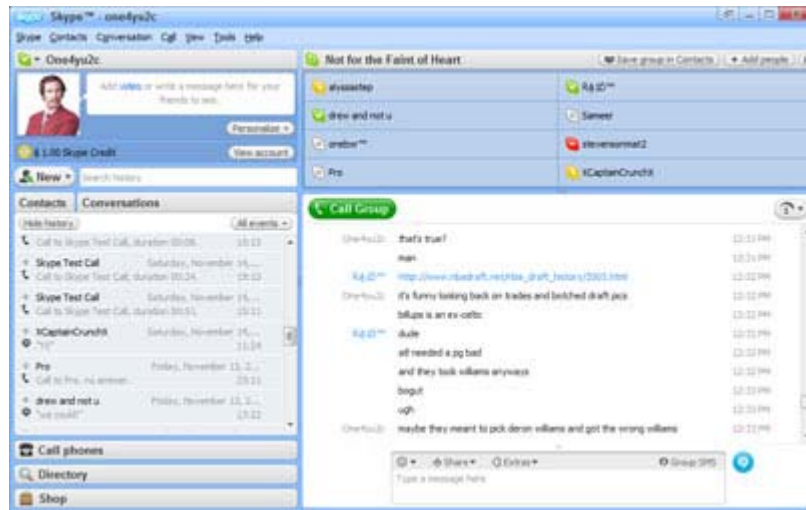


Now that we've moved the folder out of its default location, we need to trick Skype into thinking it's still there. To do this, we need to create what's called a symbolic link in the original directory that appears to be the real deal, but really just redirects to the new location in our Dropbox folder. As far as Skype is concerned, the folder will appear to still be in its original location, even though it's not.

Click on Start and type CMD (in Windows XP, click Start>Run>CMD and hit enter). Right-click the CMD executable and select Run as Administrator. To create a symbolic link, type the following command:

mklink "C:\Users\Paul\AppData\Roaming\Skype" "C:\Users\Paul\Desktop\My Dropbox \Skype"

Notice the quotation marks that enclose both the original and new location of our Skype folder. Also be sure to alter the above command depending on where your Dropbox folder is located, as well as the original folder location.



Repeat the above steps on your work PC, laptop, or wherever else you have Skype installed and your conversations will remain synced.

Ditch Skype's 4.0 Interface in Windows 7



Skype's developers not only added a bunch of new features in version 4, they also gave the app a major face lift. Some have praised the new layout and UI, while others believe Skype took a major step backwards. If you fall into the latter camp, you've probably been chugging along with version 3.8.0.188, the latest 3.x release before 4.0

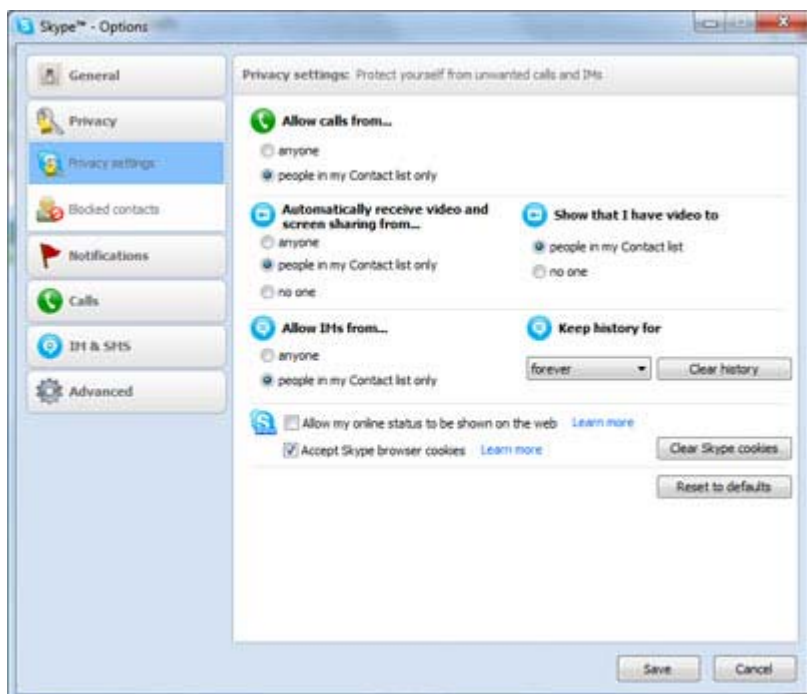
That's all fine and dandy, except that it doesn't play particularly nice with 64-bit versions of Windows 7. Many have reported that the older version installs just fine, but when you try to fire up the app, it crashes before you have a chance to log in. We've run into this issue ourselves and set out to find a solution. Well guess what? We found one.



If you're having trouble getting an version 3.8 to run, revert back to version 3.6, which you can find over at FileHippo.com or OldVersion.com. Skype 3.6.0.248, the latest release before 3.8, doesn't appear to suffer the same setback in Windows 7. Just be warned that by going back so far, you'll be running a dated app that's several versions behind the latest release, which means you're missing out on added features and potentially leaving yourself open to unpatched bugs and security risks.

Set up a Home Surveillance System

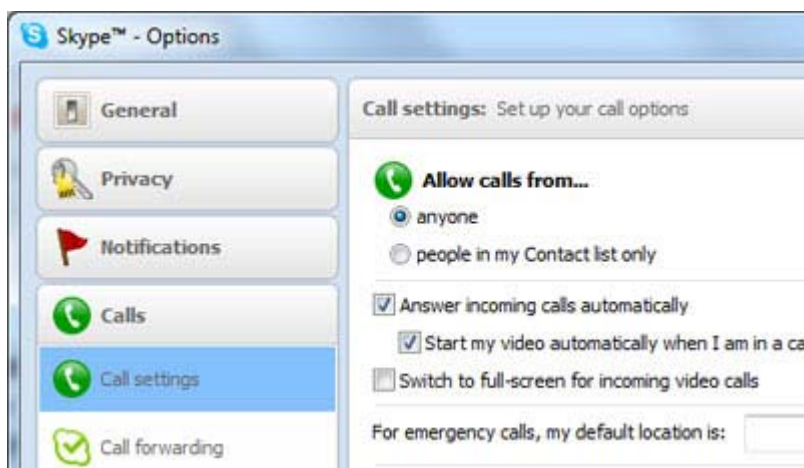
Do you really know what your pets are up to when you leave for work? Want to catch the underwear gnomes red handed? A surveillance system is just what you need, but these tend to be pricey and sometimes difficult to set up and maintain. Not so with Skype.



For this to work, you'll need a second account. Once you've registered an alternate alias, sign in to Skype using the new credentials. Click on Tools>Options>Privacy and click all of the 'people in my Contact list only' radio button (there should be four). This will ensure that spammers don't end up tying up your home surveillance account. Click the same radio button option under Calls>Call settings and IM & SMS>IM settings.



Next, navigate to Tools>Options>Video Setting and select both radio buttons that read 'people in my Contact list only.'

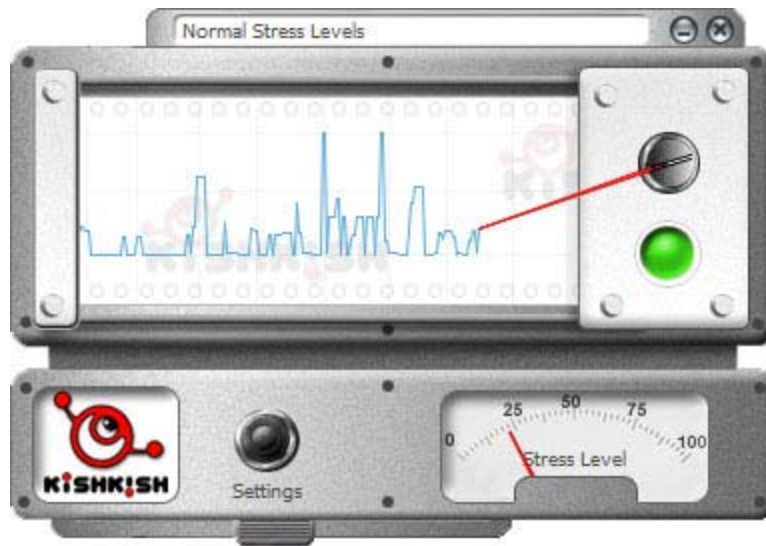


Now head over to Tools>Options>Calls and mash the 'Show advanced options' button. Check both the 'Answer incoming calls' and 'Start my video automatically when I am in a call' checkboxes.

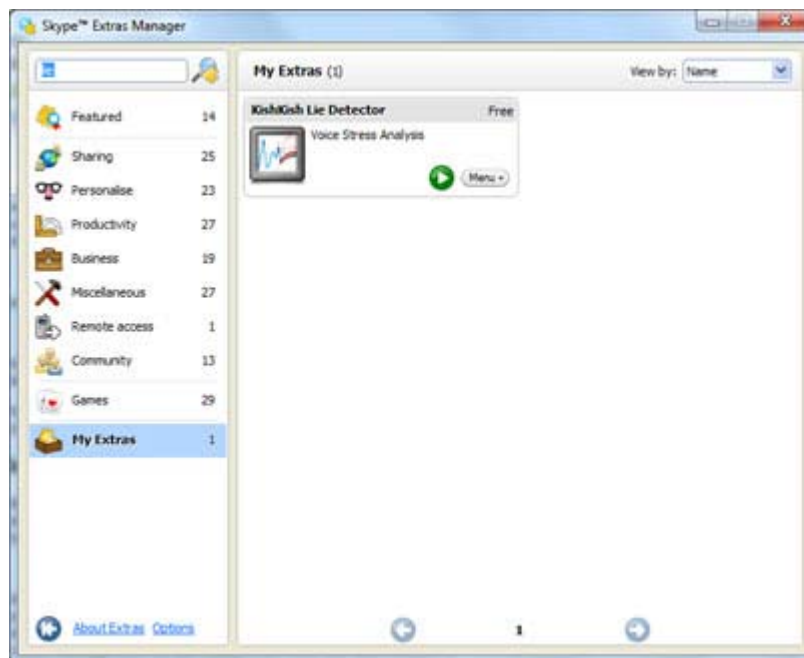
That's all there is to it! Leave your home PC running while you're away at work or on vacation and call up your secondary account whenever you want to check in. Keep your speakers turned on if you want to talk to your pets.

Interrogate Your Callers

Feel like you're being a fed a line of bull? Maybe that's because you are! But don't torture yourself by replaying the sketchy conversation in your head all day long, and instead let KishKish's Lie Detector give you a hand.



Once installed, this free 'Skype Extra' sits in the background and analyzes your caller's voice. Stress levels are updated in real-time, so in theory, you should be able to tell right away when someone's trying to pull a fast one. In practice? Consider this a fun parlor trick and not a polygraph replacement.



Grab the download by navigating to Tools>EXtras>Get Extras and search for KishKish Lie Detector. Keep in mind that a message will be played letting callers know what you're up to, so you're not going to catch anyone off guard.

Free, Skype Extras (KishKish Lie Detector)

Play a Song for Your Caller

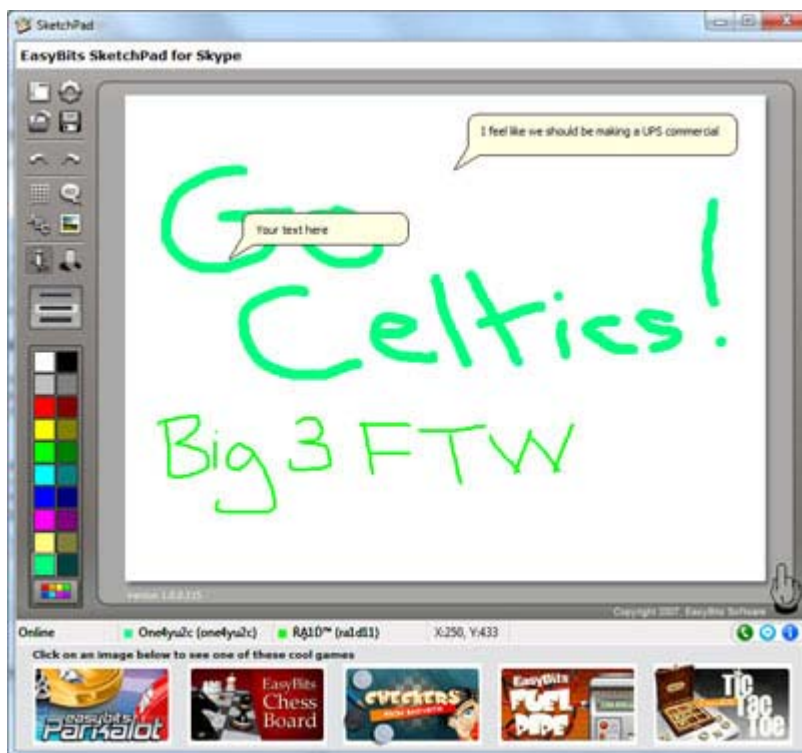


Here's a great add-on that comes in handy when you want to share a groovy tune with a friend, maybe even one you created yourself. Call Player comes with a handful of built-in sounds, including a Happy Birthday jingle, but you can add as many sounds and songs as you want. Play them during a Skype session by mashing the 'Play in Call now!!!' button.

This isn't the slickest app out there -- songs have to first be converted to WAV, which is handled automatically but takes a little bit to finish, and you can only add one file at a time -- but for a one-trick pony, it's a neat utility to add to your arsenal.

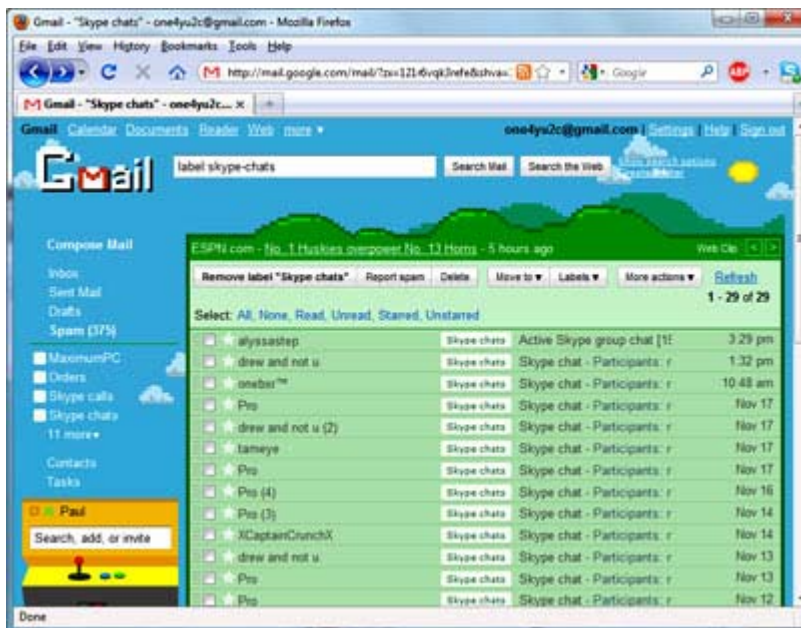
Free, Sype Extras (Call Player)

Collaborate with Sketch Pad



Our guess is you can probably use Sketch Pad for actual productivity purposes, like collaborating on a project and brainstorming with others. But in reality, you'll find yourself drawing inappropriate pictures, playing Hangman, talking smack (with pictures), and just goofing off in general. In other words, we really like this time waster.

Record Calls to Gmail

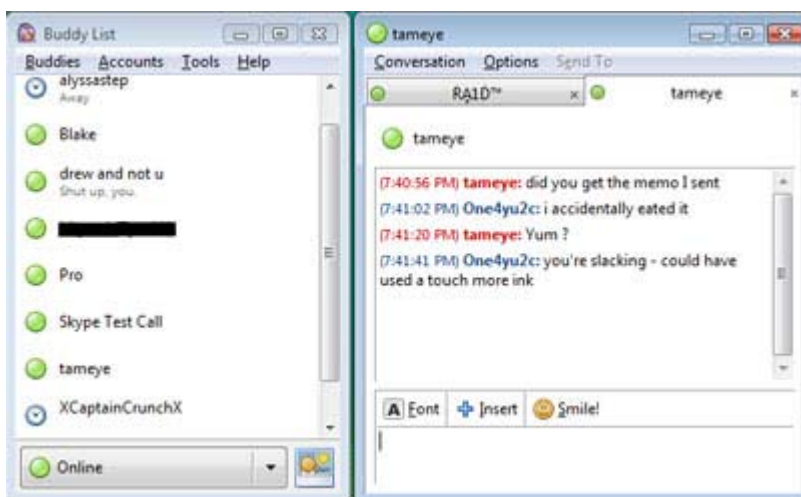


Skype automatically keeps a history of all your IM conversations, but G-Recorder one-ups the built-in functionality by keeping a log of IM conversations *and* voice chats.. They're both automatically sent to your Gmail account where they're labeled and archived by type (Skype Calls, Skype Chats) for easy viewing or listening. You can also have G-Recorder store a copy of your phone call session on your PC as an MP3 file.

Because of the way Skype handles its Extras features, you won't know that this isn't a free application until after you install it. The trial's good for 14 days, and while the program normally sells for \$25, G-Recorder has been sending out coupon codes to new users for 30 percent off, bringing the total down to \$17.50. In our opinion, it's worth it.

\$25 (\$17.50 after coupon code), Skype Extras (G-Recorder)

Integrate Skype with Pidgin



Not a lot of IM clients support Skype, and that's just frustrating. But if you use Pidgin, you're in luck. The Skype API Plugin allows you to setup your Skype account with the multiprotocol client, though there's a catch. For it to work, you still need to have Skype running in the background (the plugin forces it to run silent). The upshot is you'll have access to all of your contacts within Pidgin's interface. Is the trade off worth it? We'll let you decide that one for yourself.

Free, Skype API Plugin

COMMENTS:8

TAGS: [Software](#), [Skype](#), [VOIP](#), [how-to](#), [features](#), [guide](#)

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